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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MUSCAT 000649

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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/ARPI, NEA/RA, NEA/PPD, T, P
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MNUC](#) [OPRC](#) [IR](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: IRAN: OMANI PUBLIC STATEMENTS

REF: A. THORNE-GRAPPO E-MAIL 4/21/06

[B](#). MUSCAT 603

[C](#). MUSCAT 590

[D](#). MUSCAT 134

Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo. Reason: 1.4 (b, d).

Summary

[1](#). (SBU) Oman's Foreign Ministry Under Secretary made a rare public statement on April 22, renewing Oman's call for a peaceful resolution of the Iran nuclear crisis, while stating for the first time that force would only be permissible if sanctioned by the UN. End summary.

[2](#). (SBU) Per ref A request, this cable summarizes press reports of recent Omani statements concerning Iran. Refs B-D report recent bilateral meetings on the same topic.

No Force Without UN Resolution

[3](#). (SBU) On April 22, Oman News Agency carried a rare press statement by MFA Under Secretary Sayyid Badr al-Busaidi, subsequently picked up by the local and regional Arabic press, urging peaceful resolution of the Iranian nuclear crisis. Dismissing speculation that Iran would close the Strait of Hormuz in event of a U.S. attack, Sayyid Badr asserted that it was in Iran's own interest to keep the Strait open. Other quotes include:

"The Sultanate does not support any use of force without a resolution by the Security Council and the international community. Iran is a neighboring country, and so naturally we are very concerned about its stability."

"The Sultanate and GCC states are very keen to ensure stability and security in the Middle East and Gulf region. We also take every possible initiative to eliminate any source of tension or disputes in the area."

"We should find a peaceful solution to the (Iran nuclear) crisis. A reconciliation would save face for the parties in the crisis. The Sultanate, as a friend of both Iran and the United States, provides every possible support to reach a peaceful settlement for the crisis."

Rice-Bin Alawi Meeting: Press Mum on Iran

[4](#). (SBU) Sayyid Badr's comments were published the same day that all local print media carried a brief report on Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi's April 21 meeting with Secretary Rice. The report stated, "The meeting dealt with a number of issues of concern to the two countries, but mainly the developing trade relations between the Sultanate and the U.S. in light of the Free Trade Agreement between the two countries. The two leaders also discussed matters of common concern at the regional and international levels." The April 21 editorial in the government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" noted that "the Sultanate continues to make efforts, quietly, to support stability and reduce tensions in the region. In this context comes Yusuf bin Alawi's visit to the U.S."

Other Recent Remarks

[5](#). (SBU) There have been a few other recent alleged Omani statements concerning Iran. On April 3, Iranian and Pakistani dailies reported on FM Bin Alawi's press conference with the Pakistani FM, in which he reportedly called for resolving Iran's nuclear case through peaceful means and stated that Oman and Pakistan had "identical views" on issues of interest to them. Pakistani FM Kasuri had earlier

allegedly stated that Pakistan opposed any coercive measures against Iran. On April 13, the Iranian News Agency claimed that Omani Shura Council president Shaykh Abdallah al-Qatabi, who met his Iranian counterpart on the margins of an OIC parliamentary speakers conference, had praised Iran's "achievements in accessing nuclear technology," and stated that Oman did not consider Iran's nuclear activities as a threat to its interests.

Comment

16. (C) Sayyid Badr's press statement was a rare event, as most of his public statements are made without specific attribution. The timing was intended to coincide with the Foreign Minister's current meetings in Washington with senior USG officials, and no doubt to dampen apprehensions here and in Tehran over the anticipated U.S.-Omani dialog on Iran. This is the first time Sayyid Badr -- or any other Omani official -- has commented publicly in such detail on Oman's views about the Iranian nuclear crisis.
GRAPPO